

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A cable comprising at least one optical fiber and at least one covering layer comprising (a) ~~a thermoplastic polymer or a photopolymerizable resin~~ an organic compound selected from the group consisting of polymers, monomers, and oligomers and (b) a composite material, wherein:

said composite material is in the form of particles, ~~and;~~

said particles have a size of nanometer order and include an ~~organic compound and an~~ inorganic compound;

said inorganic compound (i) is graphite or an inorganic oxide, (ii) has a layered structure, and (iii) has been treated to allow a partial amount of said organic compound to be inserted between the layers of said inorganic compound; and

the partial amount of said organic compound is ~~selected from the group consisting of polymers, monomers, and oligomers, and~~ is inserted between the layers of said inorganic compound.

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 1, in which said inorganic oxide is selected from the group consisting of a metal oxide of layered structure and a silicate of layered structure.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 3, in which said silicate of layered structure is selected from the group consisting of mica and clay.

AMENDMENT

U.S. Appln. No. 09/559,595

Claim 5 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 4, in which said clay is selected from the group consisting of talc, vermiculite, kaolinite, smectite, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 5, in which said smectite is selected from the group consisting of montmorillonite, bentonite, beidellite, nontronite, saponite, hectorite, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 6, in which said smectite is selected from the group consisting of montmorillonite and bentonite.

Claim 8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 1, in which said organic compound is a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyethers, polyvinyl ethers, polyurethanes, polyurethane acrylates, maleates, fumarates, polythiols, polyenes, and copolymers and mixtures thereof.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 1, in which said organic compound is a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polybutylene-terephthalates, vinyl polymers, elastomers, silicones, and copolymers and mixtures thereof.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A cable according to claim 1, in which said organic compound is a polymer selected from the group consisting of epoxy resins, polyesters, polyamides, polyimides, polyetherimides, polyamidimides, polyurethanes, silicones, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A cable according to any one of claims 1, 3-7 and 9-11, comprising an optical fiber surrounded by a protective coating including at least one layer

AMENDMENT

U.S. Appln. No. 09/559,595

constituted essentially by said ~~thermoplastic polymer or photopolymerizable resin~~ organic compound (a) and said composite material (b).

Claim 13 (currently amended): A cable according to any one of claims 1, 3-7 and 9-11, including a plurality of optical fibers and an outer sheath including at least one layer constituted essentially by said ~~thermoplastic polymer or photopolymerizable resin~~ organic compound (a) and said composite material (b).

Claim 14 (currently amended): A cable according to any one of claims 1, 3-7 and 9-11, comprising a bundle of optical fibers and an insulating covering having at least one layer constituted essentially by said ~~thermoplastic polymer or photopolymerizable resin~~ organic compound (a) and said composite material (b).

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing ~~a composite material for a~~ the cable according to any one of claims 1, 3-7, and 9-11, ~~wherein the composite material is made by the following steps comprising:~~

treating said inorganic compound, which is in the form of particles having an initial size of micron order with an agent so as to ensure that said inorganic compound particles are compatible with said organic compound; and

mixing said treated inorganic compound with said organic compound at a temperature higher than the softening temperature or melting temperature of said organic compound, thereby obtaining said organic compound (a) and said composite material (b), wherein said composite material (b) is in the form of said particles, ~~said composite material particles have~~ having a size of nanometer order, ~~and said composite material particles comprise~~ and comprising said partial amount of said organic compound inserted between the layers of said inorganic compound.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A method according to claim 15, in which said inorganic compound is a clay and said compatibility agent is selected from the group consisting

AMENDMENT

U.S. Appln. No. 09/559,595

of quaternary ammonium salts, polyethylene oxides, and phosphorous-containing derivatives.